XIV.

## The Individual Self.

The Upaniṣads make out that of all finite objects, the Self has the highest reality and though not the absolute itself, it comes nearest to the absolute. There are passages where the finite self is looked upon as the reflection of the universe. The whole world is the process of the finite striving to become infinite, and this tension is found in the individual Self. According to the Taittiriya the several elements of the cosmos are found in the nature of the individual. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (VI. II. 3 & 4) fire, water & earth are said to constitute the jīvātman or the individual soul, together with the principle of the infinite. (See also Aitareya III. 3: Śvetāśvatara, IV. 12. 6.; Praśna VI. 11.) The individual subject is the world in miniature & the world is the individual writ large. Plato in his "Timaeus" institutes an analogy between the macrocosm and the microcosm, the universe & man. The soul of the world is said to be compounded by God Himself out of the changeless & the changeful & inserted in the midst of the universe (34. B.). The universe according to him is a magnified man. See Tait. i. 3 & Anandagiri's commentary on it.

Man is the meeting point of the various stages of reality. The human

soul has affinities with every grade of existence from top to bottom. There is in it the divine element which we call the beatific consciousness, the Ānanda State, by which at rare moments it enters into immediate relations with the absolute. The finite self or the embodied soul is the Ātman coupled with the senses & the mind.

"Since God collected & resumed in man,
The firmaments, the Bhūta and the lights.
Fish, fowl and beast and insect —
Of various life caught back upon His arm all
their brains,
Reorganised & constituted man,
The microcosm, the adding up of works."
— Browning —

"Two birds, akin and friends, cling to the self same tree. One of them eats the sweet berry, but the other gazes upon him without eating. In the same tree — the world tree — man dwells along with God. with troubles overwhelmed, he faints & grieves at his own helplessness. But when he sees the other, the Lord in whom he delights — ah, what glory is his, his troubles pass away". (Mundaka. III 1.2. See R.V. I. 164. 20.). The natural & the divine are in unstable harmony. The being of the individual is a continual becoming,

a striving after what is not. Man feels this struggle in every aspect of his life, intellectual, emotional & moral. As finite & human he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God without sinking his individuality and transforming the whole of the finiteness into infiniteness, humanity into divinity. The reality of the Self is the infinite; the unreality which is to be got rid of is the finite. It is the presence of the infinite that confers dignity on the Self of man. Sub specie aeternitatis, the self is perfect. (See Sankara: Introduction to V.S.).

There is a psychological side on which the selves repel each other and exclude one another. The exclusiveness is the appearance of distinction. The hypothesis of exclusive selves leaves no room for the ideals of truth, goodness and love. These presuppose that man is not perfect as he is, that there is something higher than the actual self which he has to attain to secure peace of mind.

Though the individual soul fighting with the lower nature is the highest in the world, it is not the highest realisable. Only when the God him realises itself, only when the ideal reaches its fruition is the destiny of man fulfilled. The individual is the battlefield in which the fight occurs. The battle must be over and the pain of contradiction transcended for the ideal to be realised. When the finite self attains the supreme, the Godhead from which it descended, the end of Spiritual life is reached. "When to a man who understands, the self has become all things, what sorrow, what trouble, can there be to him, who

has once beheld that unity?

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## XV

## The Ethics of the Upanisads.

It is obvious that the ideal of the Upanisads is the becoming One with God. The world issues from God & must therefore seek its rest in God. "All birds go towards the tree intended for their abode, so all this goes to the supreme self" (Praśna IV. 7.). "May I enter Thee, such as Thou art, O Lord; May Thou O Lord, enter me ----- May I become well cleansed O Lord." (Taitt: I. 4.). "Thou art my resting place". (Taitt. I. 4.). The realisation of the oneness with God is the ideal of man. After ages of development, man alone has become conscious of the great scheme of the universe. He alone feels the summons of the infinite, and consciously grows towards the heavenly Stature awaiting him. The absolute is the deliberate goal of the finite self.

It is a state "far above hunger & thirst, above sorrow & confusion, above old age and death." "As the sun, the eye of the universe, remains far off & unaffected by all sickness that meets the eye, so also the One, the Atman, who dwells in all creatures, dwells afar & untouched by the sorrows of the world." To live in the world of plurality is indeed a dire misfortune. A return from the plurality to the One is the ideal goal. The

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